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The Drygoodsman and general merchant
Title:
[The Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Dry...
Place:
[St. Louis]
Date:
[1913]

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[35]-50 p. illus., ports. 33cm.

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The Drygoodsman
Fifteenth Anniversary Number
Nov. 15. 1913

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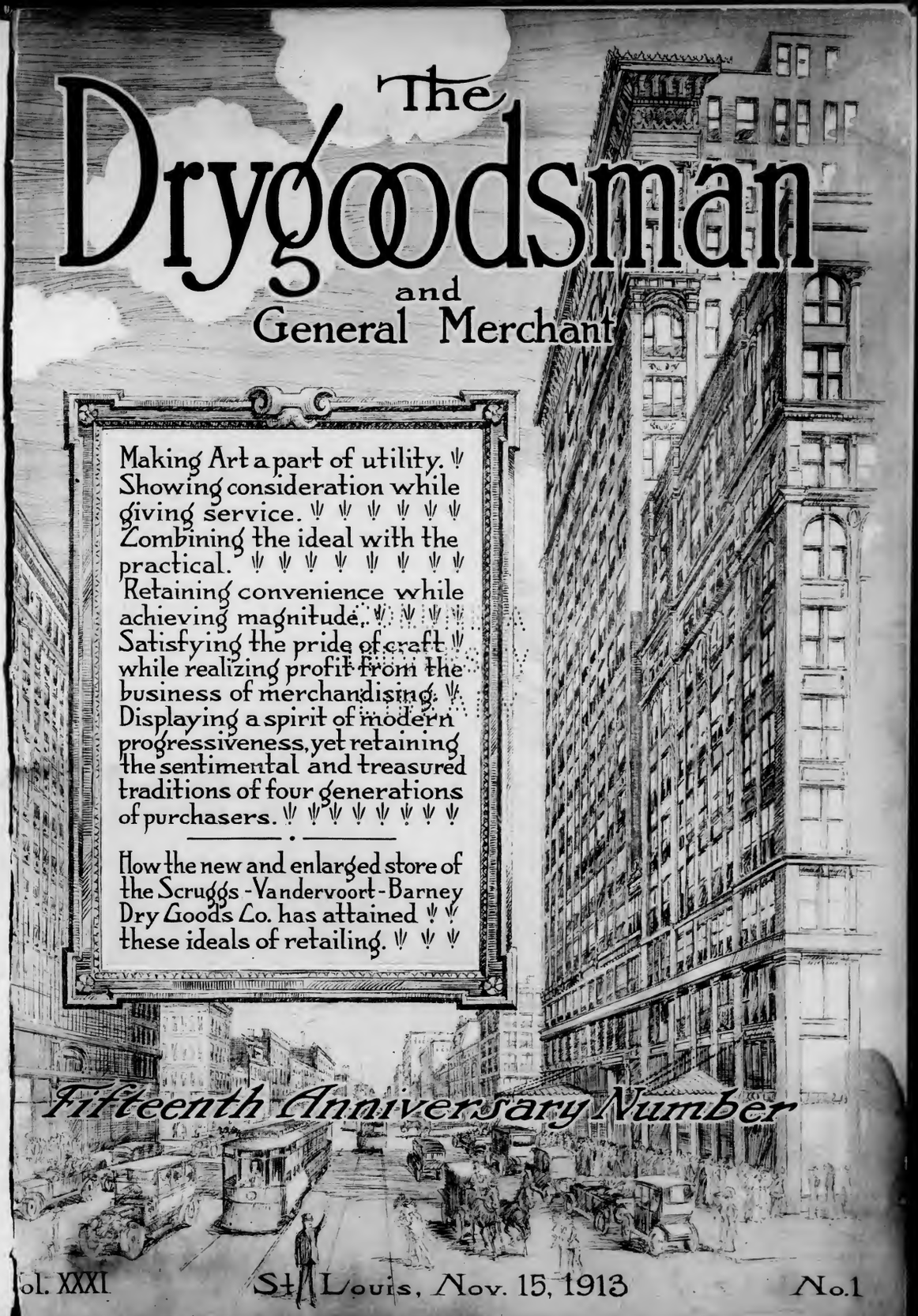
The Drygoodsman and General Merchant

Making Art a part of utility.
Showing consideration while giving service.
Zombining the ideal with the practical.
Retaining convenience while achieving magnitude.
Satisfying the pride of craft while realizing profit from the business of merchandising.
Displaying a spirit of modern progressiveness, yet retaining the sentimental and treasured traditions of four generations of purchasers.

How the new and enlarged store of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Dry Goods Co. has attained these ideals of retailing.



Fifteenth Anniversary Number

ol. XXXI St. Louis, Nov. 15, 1913 No. 1

Business

The following pages are reprinted from the Fifteenth Anniversary Edition of The Drygoodsman.

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The Drygoodsman and General Merchant

MAY 20 1935 DA

THE DRYGOODSMAN celebrates its fifteenth anniversary by presenting to its readers in this issue a description of the newly enlarged store of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Dry Goods Co. of St. Louis, giving therein many practical details of the store's arrangement, equipment, organization and operation, and all with a view of affording a worthy object lesson in the ideals of practical and profitable merchandising. The high standards set by the store itself—in the present instance rational development of the rugged honesty of merchandising and management and the courtly gentleness of the personality in which it was early established—are a concrete expression of those ideals in merchandising which it has been ever the aim of THE DRYGOODSMAN to impress upon its readers as not only the best expression of mercantile personality, but also as possessing those elements and principles which are the best foundation for material merchandising success.

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

Buchman

The following pages are reprinted from the Fifteenth Anniversary Edition of The Drygoodsman.

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"Vandervoort Block" looking Northwest from Olive and Ninth Streets

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Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney

A Great Retail Store which Is a Concrete Expression of the Higher Ideals in Merchandising and whose Inception and Development Has Continuously Been Based upon Rugged Honesty and Gentle Courtliness

VERY nearly every retail store which has made a national impression, achieved national distinction, become a part of the sentiment and tradition of the American dry goods trade, has had behind it a personality combining great energy, broad vision, methodical and unconquerable determination, but withal possessing a deep human sympathy and essentially kind at heart.

A. T. Stewart, Marshall Field, Nathan Strauss, B. Altman, John Wanamaker, James McCreery—these and others of that distinguished group who have written the chief chapters of American retailing history, were all men combining these qualities to a pronounced degree.

REFLECTED FEELING.

It appears to us that this is but another expression of the imperfectly understood forces of psychology. We instinctively like those who like us; we feel kindly toward those who are charitable toward and with us, and that attitude of mind which we see maintained by the public toward any institution is, to a surprising degree, but a reflection of the feeling entertained by the head of that institution towards humanity—the public itself.

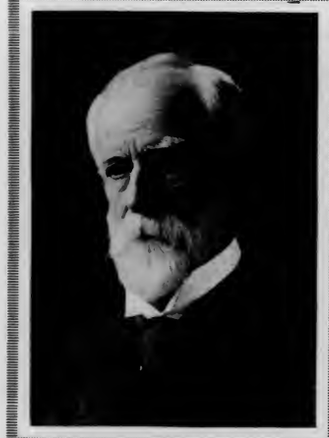
This is a theory of merchandising which for years we have maintained and in no instance is it more clearly demonstrated than in the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store of St. Louis. It is our belief that no store in this country possesses a more valuable good will than is possessed by this establishment, and in making this statement we have mentally reviewed all that distinguished list of dominant mercantile leaders, whose names are synonymous in this country with integrity in retailing. The hold of the Vandervoort store upon the hearts and the interests of the people of St. Louis is peculiar. It is at once a commercial establishment and a social institution. The average St. Louisan feels a certain pride in association with the store, is glad to be seen there, likes to refer to his purchases as having been made there. To have a charge account at Vandervoort's by many is felt to be a badge of respectability.

Melville L. Wilkinson, President

The store and the people maintain a bearing towards each other that is characterized by mutual respect and consideration. This, to say the least, is intangible and is certainly not to be definitely measured and yet is as much of a real entity as the physical atmosphere which surrounds and pervades the store itself.

The foundation of this peculiar prestige and good-will may be said to rest in and on the rugged honesty of merchandising inculcated in the great establishment of A. T. Stewart in New York, the gentle courtliness of a born and bred Virginian and the kindly consideration of a man who loved and was loved by all. For the individuality and mercantile rearing of a Vandervoort, the nativity of a Scruggs and the personality of a Barney was welded into that foundation which has made of the store, the text of this issue of THE DRYGOODSMAN, what it is and stands for today.

The retention of this old-fashioned good-will during the period of expansion and modernization which is now going on in the store must be credited to the personality of Mr. Melville L. Wilkinson, the president of the company, who possesses in a high degree those qualities of the head and heart which it appears to us are inseparable from great mercantile distinction. Mr. Wilkinson, though he came to St. Louis from the East, is not essentially of the East. He was born and reared at Maysville, Ind., the son of a Methodist minister, whose home was one of unusual culture



Strauss Portrait *Richard M. Scruggs*

and refinement. His education was completed at Elkhart and his initiation into business was at Butler, and thus the West claims him first. His larger experience was obtained in Cleveland and Buffalo, but the measure of the man is evidenced in his rise from a village clerk to high rank and supervision over some of the finest department stores of the country. He is president of the William Hengerer and the J. M. Adams companies of Buffalo, but the major part of his work is given to St. Louis, where his labors are now coming to their fruition.

Of the past of the store of which Mr. Wilkinson is now the head there is much of interest to be written.

It was in April, 1850, that the house now known as the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Dry Goods Co. had its beginning on Fourth street in St. Louis, in a small establishment scarcely more than 25 by 30 feet in what was then known as Glasgow Row, a number of dwellings which were passing through transition stage to commercial property.

THE FIRST PARTNERSHIP.

At that time the firm bore the title of McClelland, Scruggs & Co., the members being Messrs. M. V. L. McClelland, his brother, and Mr. Richard M. Scruggs. The firm from a small beginning grew steadily and, for those times, rapidly, the partners vying with each other and their employes as the store grew larger in that same character of service to its patrons which is emphatically a feature of the present day establishment.

In 1860 a change took place, as a result of which the firm name became W. L. Vandervoort & Co. Mr. Scruggs and the Messrs. McClelland retained interests in the new firm, but Mr. Scruggs was more actively engaged for a year or two in a wholesale business which had been established on Main street. This, however, was continued for only a short time.

Mr. Scruggs' personal interest had always been in the direction of the retail business, and therefore at the conclusion of his trial of the wholesale business, he became more actively concerned with the affairs of the retail store in which he had continued to maintain a financial interest.

Following this slight digression in title, the store became known for a short period immediately after the war as the Vandervoort-McClelland store. At about the same time that Mr. Vandervoort had become interested in the establishment, Mr. Charles E. Barney also joined the store force, having previously come to St. Louis from New York, where he had received his initial experience in the retail drygoods business.

MR. BARNEY'S ASSOCIATION.

Mr. Barney was active in the management of the store during the war period and up to 1870, when for the first time his name was given a place in the firm title. Previous to that he had been the manager and a strong spirit in the development of the establishment's success.

William L. Vandervoort

In 1870 the firm was formed as the partnership of Scruggs, Vandervoort and Barney. Two years later the McClelland interest was absorbed by the other partners, and from that time for nearly thirty years the ownership of the establishment rested in the hands of the three men whose name it bore.

GROWTH AND REMOVALS.

During the early period of the store's growth it had expanded from the small space which was then 415 N. Fourth st. until it occupied a total frontage of 125 feet, the numbers being 415-17-19-21-25 and 27 N. Fourth st. and just previous to 1870, a building was constructed for the use of the firm on practically the same site. That building is still standing, though utilized for another purpose.

The Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store remained at this location until August, 1888, when it moved to the corner of Broadway and Locust st. in the Mercantile Library building, now occupied by that library and by the Mechanics-American National Bank. During its occupancy of this site the store continued to grow, taking all the floors of the library building except that occupied by the library itself. It also expanded to the southward, occupying the upper floors of adjoining buildings, and in addition, was extended by means of an L connection to a frontage on Olive st.

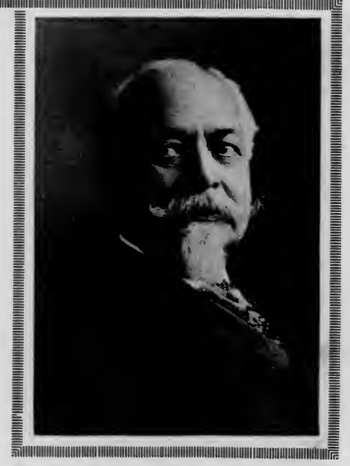
TO OLIVE AND LOCUST AT TENTH.

In these buildings the store continued until November 1907, when the Syndicate Trust building was completed at Olive and Locust sts at Tenth and the store took over the first eight floors and basement for its exclusive use.

The operation of the establishment continued in this location without material change until the past year, when, under the management of its present president, Mr. Melville L. Wilkinson, arrangements were completed for the occupancy of the first four floors of the Century building adjoining to the east, together with a special structure of four stories to ocupy the alley space between the two buildings, and also a twelve-story building on the north side of Locust st., which is now under way and which will be utilized as a warehouse and a reserve stock department, with the first floor devoted to salesroom purposes. The two buildings, when the new structure is completed, will be connected by a tunnel running under Locust st.

The active management of the store rested with Messrs. Scruggs, Vandervoort and Barney from the day of their

(Continued on Page 47.)



Strauss Portrait *Charles E. Barney*

Elevator group in Century Building portion of store, showing entrance to beauty parlors. Elevator enclosures are of wired glass set in ornamental iron frames.

The Store's Physical Features

Problems of Equipment and Service and How they Were Solved, together with the Utilization of Incidental Obstacles which Confronted Reconstruction Work and Could Not Be Absolutely Overcome in a Physical Sense

THE new store of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Dry Goods Co. affords an interesting subject for the student of store arrangement and equipment.

To attain the result desired by the management it was first necessary to overcome a number of baffling obstacles. While the identical conditions are not likely to be again met with in any other store in the world, still the principles which were applied in the working out of this satisfactory solution can, in our judgment, be applied with equal success in any store arrangement problem which may arise.

NOT DESIGNED FOR RETAILING.

To begin with, it must be understood that the store or stores which are now occupied by this firm were not wholly or originally designed for retailing purposes. They adjoin each other in the block, but were formerly separated by an alley running through from Olive to Locust streets.

The store formerly occupied the Syndicate Trust building (the western portion of the block), and when this building was erected, some six years ago, it was estimated that the lower eight floors occupied by the store would be ample for all their requirements for years to come. In placing elevators, entrances and delivery facilities, no especial thought, therefore, was given to the possibility or probability of the store's expanding east of it and taking in the other half block. As the business grew, however, the management realized the necessity for securing more space and, therefore, acquired the Century building, covering the half block adjoining, reconstructed the lower floors, secured by ordinance the vacation of the alley between, joined the buildings and thus made them into one. This wedding of two structures begot the usual offspring of structural peculiarities. The elevators in the Century building and the entrances thereto were located with the requirements of an office building primarily in mind. They are not placed as they would have been had the building been originally erected for retailing purposes.

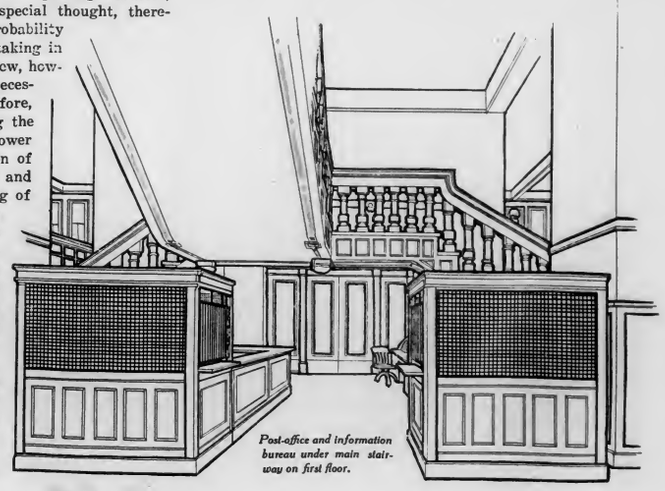
Furthermore, above the first floor, the levels of the store in the eastern half and the western half of the block are not the same, varying approximately two to three feet. To have adjusted these differences in floor levels was a matter absolutely out of the question. To have changed the location of elevators was also impossible, being prohibited for one reason by the enormous structural cost which would have been entailed and, furthermore, would have been prevented, had it even been considered, by the necessity for supplying uninterrupted service to tenants of the offices in the floors above.

The store, therefore, by its structural entity, is divided into three distinct units—an eastern half at one floor level, a western half at another floor level and an alley way between.

MEETING THE DIFFICULTIES.

This alley way is separated from the eastern half by the difference in floor levels and from the western half by the elevator enclosures.

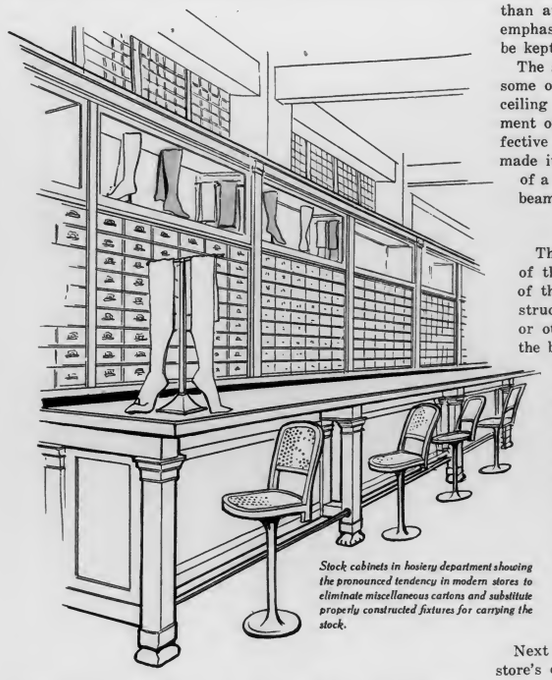
Furthermore, the position of the elevators in the eastern half of the building is such as to cut off or isolate a portion of the floor space between these elevators and the Ninth street frontage of the building. It was here that the good judgment of the designers of the store displayed itself. There was no possible way in which these structural fea-



Post-office and information bureau under main stairway on first floor.

Views of third floor, ready-to-wear departments.

1—The costume room.
2—The corset section.
3—Muslin underwear.
4—Central section, white goods.
5—Misses' ready-to-wear.
6—Junior millinery.



Stock cabinets in hosiery department showing the pronounced tendency in modern stores to eliminate miscellaneous cartons and substitute properly constructed fixtures for carrying the stock.

tures could have been hidden or have been overcome and, therefore, instead of making any effort whatsoever to conceal or minimize them, the store utilized and emphasized them.

UTILIZING ALLEY SPACE.

The narrow alley way which forms the connecting link between the two buildings was especially equipped and devoted to a specific line of merchandise, thus forming in a sense a specialty store or stores on each floor.

On the second floor the space is devoted to the children's shoe department in one end and the bank and safety deposit vaults at the other.

On the third floor the southern half of the "alley" is equipped as a misses' costume room and the north half as a juvenile millinery department.

On the fourth floor the north and south halves are devoted respectively to office furniture and sewing machines. This alley way, being raised as it is approximately two to three feet above the eastern half of the building, gives a balcony effect on each floor, affording a view or vista which would not be given were the entire area of the store at one floor level. Because of this distinct separation in the eastern and western portions of the building, distinctive departmental arrangements have been made possible which would not have been altogether in keeping, if the arrangement had thrown the whole store into one. The problem of the "dead space" behind the elevators in the Century building was solved by locating therein on the second floor a men's smoking, waiting and lounging room; on the third floor the hair dressing, manicuring and massage parlors and on the fourth floor the model rooms which are also utilized for demonstrations by the contract department.

This does not mean that these departments are inaccessible—far from it. All are prominent; all have entrances leading directly from the main areas of each floor.

The point is that the elevator enclosures have been utilized as the separating wall to define the department itself. This principle of making use of the difficulties rather than attempting to conceal them is a point that we want to emphasize to our readers. It is a valuable point and one to be kept in mind in the solution of any practical store problem

The same theory, when applied to architecture, has given us some of our most beautiful architectural forms. The beamed ceiling was originally nothing more than a frank acknowledgment of the structural supports of the floor above and so effective was the result, that after our system of construction made it no longer necessary to disclose the supporting beams of a floor, our architects developed the style of building false beams on the ceiling, merely for the ornamental effect.

THE UNCONCEALED SKELETON.

The English half-timbered house is another illustration of this idea. Originally, the timbers of the upper portion of the building were really the supporting members of the structure and the spaces between were filled in with plaster or other suitable material. No effort was made to conceal the beams which were the skeleton of the supporting structure itself. The beauty of the English half-timbered house was so apparent that again this idea has been adopted as a decorative scheme, and although the necessity for revealing the structural details of the building has long since passed, we find our architects now erecting residences and placing on the outside imitations of the timber supports of the old fashioned English half-timbered house.

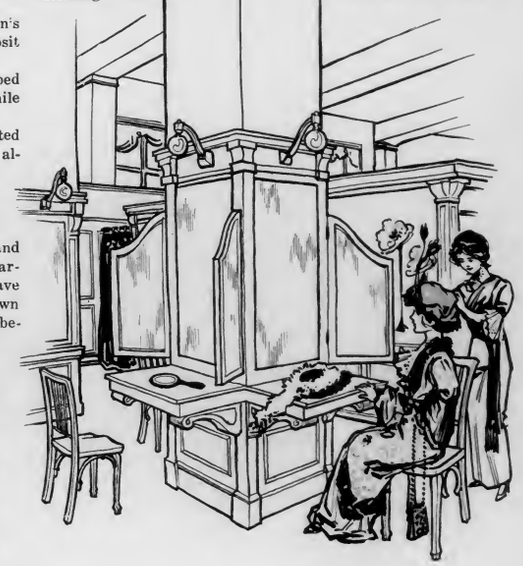
In the arrangement of the Scruggs' store, we have something of this same honesty of architectural idea, namely: the frank acknowledgment of the structural features of the store and the utilization of these features in the most practicable way.

DISTINCTIVE PIANO SALON.

Next to this, perhaps the most distinctive feature of the store's equipment is the piano department on the sixth floor. Without exception, we believe this to be the most beautiful department we have ever seen in a retail store in this country.

We have been in and have made a study of very nearly every large store in the United States and, as accurately as impressions can be carried in the mind, we have compared the most striking fea-

Detail of equipment (mahogany) in millinery, showing prevailing type of display case and mirrors.



Wrapping desk—cash is handled in cash register—pneumatic tube connects with credit office.

A doubt at once arises in the mind of the practical merchant as to the serviceability of this finish, but we have been assured by the management that a year of test and experimentation was given before this was decided upon.

The prevailing wood finish of the high-class store of today is mahogany. It is pointed out that mahogany, in order to present its best appearance, must be periodically rubbed down, that the porters of the building constantly employed on this work, can, with the same expenditure of energy, sponge off or wash down the white woodwork and keep it in perfect condition. Furthermore, in a store of this size, a house painter is continually employed and once a year he can freshen up the enameled finish.

Next to this distinctive feature of the store, the thing impressing us chiefly has been the idea of giving individuality or privacy to the various departments. One of the chief criticisms which is made of the department store system of merchandising is that it "handles its customers in a crowd"; that the purchaser loses her individuality; that there is a rule of thumb method which recognizes no distinction in individuals, herds them in droves and endeavors to get them in the building, rush them through it and push them out with the greatest facility and speed.

The average big store presents on each floor an area of wide expanse with low fixtures, especially designed so as not to obstruct the general view. The departments are not very distinctively separated from each other and the purchaser in one department, as a rule, is subject to the distractions afforded by the activities of an acre or more of adjoining selling area.

On the first floor of the "Vandervoort block" this open arrangement is followed to as great a degree as the structural arrangement of the store will permit, but above the first floor this scheme is to a certain extent departed from. On the third floor, in the white section, for example, there is a considerable open area in the center of the floor, but surrounding this main portion the space is, by the arrangement of fixtures, subdivided into booths, giving the effect of specialty stores.

For example, the knit underwear department is located in a three-sided square, open on the fourth side to the main floor area. The corset department located in one corner, has by its arrangement of fixtures a distinct separation from the main floor area and yet opens directly into it.

GOVERNING THOUGHT PREVAILS.

The mourning goods section is re-subdivided and also has additional rooms provided where the customer may find seclusion from the activities of the store and make her purchases in quiet and privacy. This consideration of the customer's sensibilities is also strikingly shown in the infants' wear department, where special rooms provided for the purpose will enable the expectant mother to select her infant's layette in absolute seclusion.

This same governing thought is evidenced in the women's and children's shoe departments on the second floor where, instead of one large expanse of selling space, it is divided into four distinct sections.

Individuality is even given to the boys' clothing department, by separating it in the arrangement of fixtures from the youths' or older boys' section and both of these are separated from the main area of the men's clothing department. In the arrangement of the curtain and drapery departments this principle is especially emphasized and by it the customer who has extensive purchases to make of draperies, curtains and decorative materials can be completely removed from the activities of the general store, be permitted to concentrate on the main business of her shopping expedition and be removed from the continual distractions and interruptions which are one of the chief problems in effecting a sale of an important bill of goods.

Coming down to details, the equipment of the store is also well worthy of careful study. It embodies the prevailing ideas of modern store equipment which have to a certain extent become standardized in recent years, but even here the individuality of the store has been expressed in more than one direction.

For example, a type of wrapping desk was designed and installed in various departments different from those which had been previously employed. This is a square fixture, is placed prominently on the floor in the department which it is designed to serve, instead of being located or semi-concealed in the fixtures. It is built for service and located for accessibility, and yet designed so as to give as little offense as possible to the aesthetic sense. This is made the subject of one of our special sketches.

tures of other stores and we feel justified in awarding the prize to this new department of the "Vandervoort block".

The words "beautiful", "splendid", "magnificent", "exquisite" and the kindred adjectives of the advertising department have been so greatly over-worked and abused in the department store business, that they have, in a sense, very largely lost their meaning, yet we feel that in this case these do justly apply.

On another page we show photographs of several sections of the piano department, so we will let it suffice for the purposes of the present story to say that it is beautiful, splendid and exquisite from the standpoint of art and that, furthermore, we believe that the launching of a department as important as this and dignifying it as this store has done with the magnificent setting which has been given to the merchandise is a master stroke of sound business judgment.

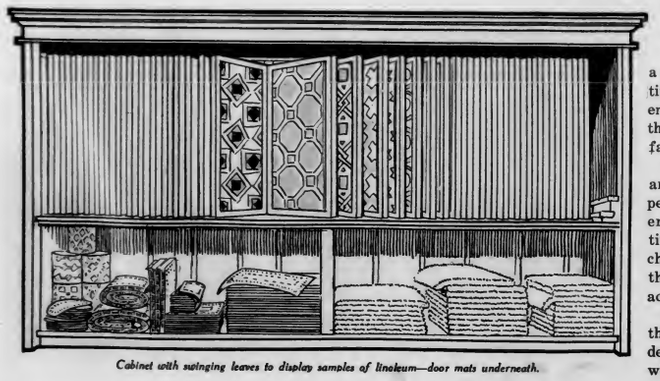
READY-TO-WEAR WHITE SECTION.

Next to the piano department, the feature of the store which most strongly claims attention is the white section of the ready-to-wear department on the third floor. The entire third floor is devoted to ready-to-wear apparel for women, misses and children.

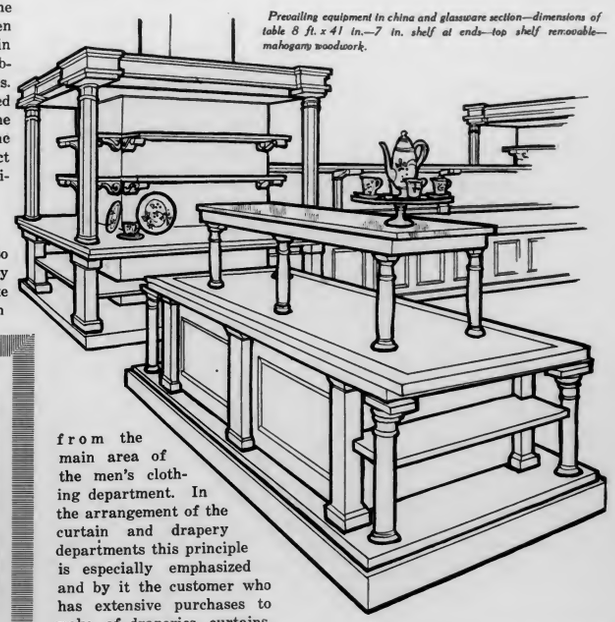
The corsets, lingerie, infants' wear, aprons, knit underwear, mourning goods, misses' wear and juvenile millinery have been segregated in the eastern half of the building, leaving the cloaks, suits, costumes, waists and adult millinery in the western half.

The eastern half of the floor has been equipped throughout in white; all fixtures, counters, cases, shelving, cabinets, post enclosures, in fact, every item of equipment, being finished in white enamel, with table and counter tops of white (unstained) mahogany. The floor is carpeted in Gobelin blue velvet and all metal work is in gold. The effect is dainty and delightful and, furthermore, harmonizes perfectly with the character of the merchandise on sale in the section.

1—Banking department.
2—Living room of model house utilized by contract department.
3—Hairdressing department
4—Men's barber shop
5—Floral department

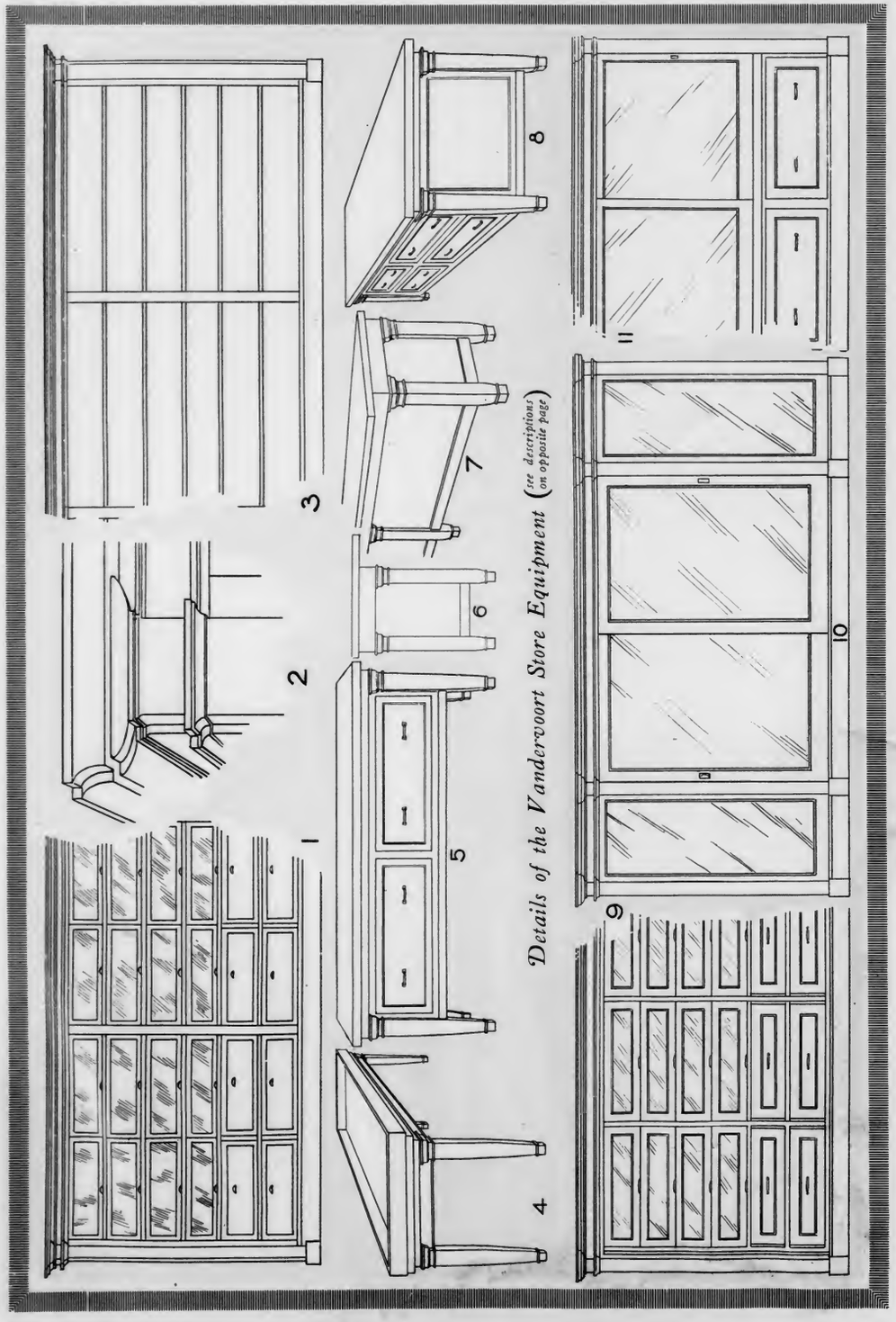


Cabinet with swinging leaves to display samples of linoleum—door mats underneath.



Prevailing equipment in china and glassware section—dimensions of table 8 ft. x 41 in.—7 in. shelf at ends—top shelf removable—mahogany woodwork.

Cabinet equipment in upholstery section with display stand and curtain rod.



Curtain cabinets and display rods. This equipment is used throughout the curtain and drapery department—woodwork oak in early English finish; gun metal rods.

A rather pronounced advance in the scheme of standardization has also been made. Items of equipment are more or less interchangeable in various departments. All counters are 32 inches high, all 26 inches wide, excepting in a few specialized departments (for example, linens) where wider counters are necessary. All wall shelving, cabinets and cases are of a uniform standard height—6 ft. 6 in.

These details of measurement, as well as the prevailing design of the more important items of equipment, are given on this and the opposite page.

Another fact impressing itself upon us, and which we believe is worthy of discussion at this point, is the pronounced tendency now manifested in all modern stores to do away with the manufacturer's cartons in the handling of goods and the substitution of either stock cartons or special cabinets designed for the merchandise.

Store Equipment Detail.

[See *drawing on opposite page.*]

Nos. 1 & 9—Shelving with Glass Doors. 6 ft. 6 inches high. 24 inches deep. Glass door 30⅛x11 inches. Drawers 30⅛x9⅛ inches.

No. 2—Cornice Detail.

No. 3—Standard Shelving. 6 ft. 6 inches high. 49 inches between divisions. Shelves 11 inches apart. Six shelves.

No. 4—Bargain Table. 30 inches wide. 32 inches high. 96 inches long. Removable tray on top, 4 inches deep.

No. 5—Display Table. 40 inches wide. 80 inches long. 32 inches high. 2 drawers opening from one side.

No. 7—Standard Counter. 33 inches high. Top 26 inches wide. Bottom 18 inches wide. Top extends 5½ inches.

No. 6—Cross Section of Counter.

No. 8—Display Table. 44 inches wide. 8 feet long. 32 inches high. 4 drawers 40 inches long, 15 inches deep opening from each side.

No. 10—Floor Case. 6 ft. 6 inches high. 34 inches deep. Small panels show treatment when columns are to be inclosed. Sliding glass doors.

No. 11—Display Case. 6 ft. 6 inches high. 8 ft. wide. 3 ft. deep. Glass doors 46 inches high. Drawers 19 inches deep. Glass ends, and mirror back.

STOCK CARTONS AND CABINETS.

For a number of years the stock carton has been a feature of the modern shoe store or shoe department. The special cabinet for garments, either cloaks and suits or men's clothing, although a development and perfection of recent years, is even now generally employed. Women's waists, muslin underwear, infants' wear and merchandise of this character is now rather generally carried in fixtures having either drawers, fitted stock boxes or glass front sections with disappearing doors built on the principle of the sectional bookcase. The modern glove department invariably has cabinets with drawers especially constructed for carrying gloves. More recently, however, we are seeing the installation of similar cabinets with drawers or compartments for men's shirts, men's collars and men's neckwear, and also the hosiery and knit underwear departments.

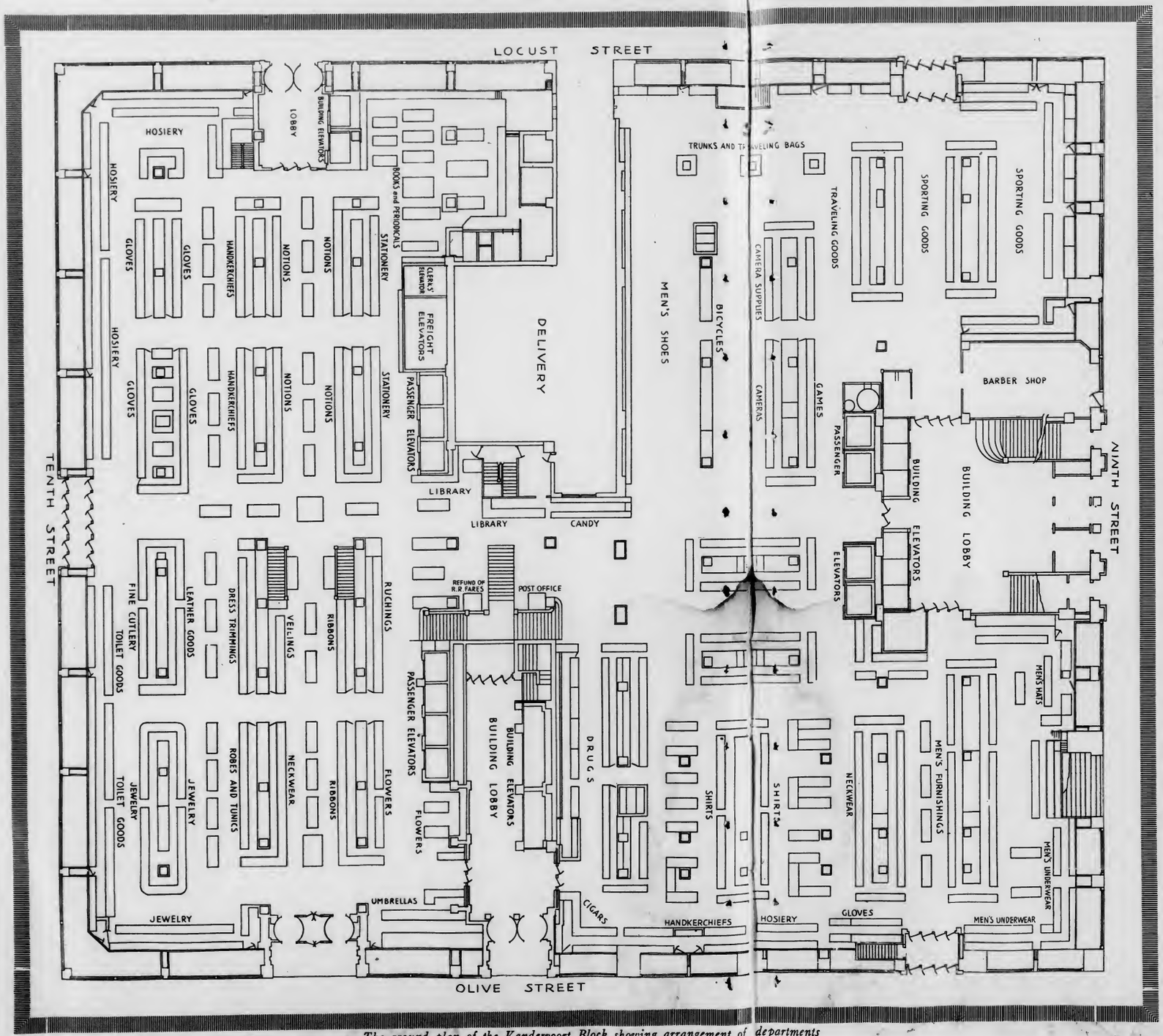
We believe the principle is capable of a rather broad development and there are good business principles involved in it. For example, knit underwear, either for men, women or children, stocked in the manufacturer's cartons, invariably presents a conglomerate and unsightly appearance. In men's neckwear, the cost of the carton adds materially to the manufacturer's cost of the product. The same is true of hosiery.

Retailers who are equipping their departments with the proper fixtures are finding that they can, by ordering their goods bundled instead of boxed, save from three to ten cents per dozen thereby. The saving in men's neckwear is greater.

Lowering the cost of producing the merchandise by only one or two per cent will more than pay the interest and depreciation charges of the most expensive equipment which might be installed.

This tendency is bound to have a great influence upon the advertising manufacturer. Generally speak-

Ornamental iron canopy and electrical automobile call over Tenth street entrance. Doorman issues numbered check to chauffeur and signals the number when customer is ready to depart.



The ground plan of the Vandervoort Block showing arrangement of departments

ing, the package is at present the chief means of identifying the product, and should the retailer eliminate the package, the manufacturer will have the problem of giving distinctiveness and individuality to his product tremendously increased.

Getting back to the main track of our story, however, there are several other features of the Vandervoort store that should not be lost sight of.

It is distinguished by the establishment of a number of lines or departments that are not usually found even in the largest stores of this country.

SOME EXCEPTIONAL DEPARTMENTS.

A drug store completely equipped and stocked has been installed, with a prescription department, and also a trained nurse who is available for consultation at any time.

The men's barber shop, illustrated elsewhere, is a feature found in only a very limited number of stores. The department devoted to cigars, tobacco and smokers' utensils is also distinctive.

The piano department, already referred to and illustrated completely elsewhere, is a feature which has not yet been adopted by the medium sized store, but it is being very generally introduced into the larger ones, there being three now established in St. Louis.

The hair dressing, manicuring and massage parlors and children's barber shop are becoming popular features of the modern store, the chief distinction of these in this case, being their equipment, illustrated elsewhere.

LOUNGING AND SMOKING ROOM.

The men's lounging and smoking room may be considered a novelty, for while there are a limited number of such in the big stores of this country, a more general practice has been to ignore this special accommodation for the males.

The practical merchant will also, in the Vandervoort store, be impressed with the provisions for making quick alterations. Auxiliary or primary work rooms have been installed immediately adjoining most of the departments requiring them.

While the main work rooms are necessarily removed from the selling floors, yet auxiliary or supplementary rooms have been installed next to the corset department, the garment department and also in the men's clothing and millinery departments.

Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney.

(Continued from Page 38)

association as a partnership continuously until 1898, during July of which year Mr. Barney died after a long illness. Mr. Vandervoort died little more than a year later, in December, 1899. Following this break in the chain of commercial association and personal friendship, Messrs. Hanford Crawford and Robert Johnston, of New York, came to the establishment in executive capacities.

Mr. Scruggs' death came in November, 1904, after which the destinies of the house rested in the hands chiefly of Messrs. Crawford and Johnston until two years ago, when the establishment became a part of the Claflin chain of stores and Mr. Melville L. Wilkinson came to St. Louis as its head as a representative of the controlling interests.

Mr. Crawford then retired from active participation in the management of the store, but Mr. Robert Johnston remained and is now vice-president of the company.

HUMANE CONSIDERATION.

During all its history, the store, which has been more familiarly known as "Vandervoort's" than its entire title, has maintained in eminent degree that same strict honesty of dealing and of merchandise and gentle consideration which its early owners practiced and inculcated in their employes.

Robert Johnston, Vice-President

John R. Towler, General Manager

T. H. Blundell, Superintendent

Service With Consideration

Foundation upon which Has Developed that Atmosphere which Surrounds and Has Indeed Been a Most Potent Force in the Growth of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Store to Its Present High Estate

THE Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store has "atmosphere". Everybody says so, and what everybody says must be true in essence.

There is that thing called atmosphere in every store, atmosphere which pertains not to the gaseous substance commonly called air with which they are pervaded, but to the people to whom their destinies are committed—their employes.

This atmosphere is not the intangible thing, as sometimes concluded in careless mood, but a living thing, pulsating, thrilling.

It is the store's character.

But, that atmosphere may be either attractive or repellant.

Atmosphere is a force more potent in good store keeping than merchandise itself. A store may be filled with the choicest and best selected of merchandise, but unless that merchandise be oxygenated with the human element in proper proportions, its respiratory functions must be materially retarded.

The Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store has atmosphere of distinctly magnetic qualities, and this is the one thing first heard of and most discussed when the house is under consideration. To recognize distinctive qualities in a man or a woman is far easier than to analyze these qualities or to tell whence they came. Everyone knows that the highly strung, nervous department store organization of today demands more of quality from its employes than was ever demanded of them before, but efficiency, as a rule, is accepted and enjoyed more as a matter of course than because of an analysis of its component parts.

EFFICIENT, AND WHY.

Such analysis, however, should be highly interesting to our retailer friends, and the purpose of this article is to deal directly with the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney employes, and, because they are recognized as efficient, to tell why.

A moment's reflection will convince that the highly trained, effective salespeople of the modern store haven't come into the possession of these qualities by chance or by inheritance, but that they are the result of careful training and of the inherent docility and tractability of the salespeople themselves, and these things are particularly true of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney people.

What then are the elements contributing to the creation of its efficient salesforce?

LOYAL, CAPABLE AGGREGATION.

Oh no, not a perfect selling entity by any means, that is not what we mean, but just a good, loyal, capable aggregation of men and women, boys and girls, so developed, so controlled that it has become second nature to them to give the utmost possible of body, mind and spirit to the end the highest success may be attained by the store in which they are partners.

Partners? Certainly. Just as much partners as the individual who puts his money into the business. For haven't they invested that which is worth at least as much to a business as money—their loyalty and their good will?

GAINING HEART SERVICE.

The primal aim of every intelligent store manager today is to gain the heart-service of his employes.

Mr. Wilkinson, president of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Dry Goods Co., says that he never allows an opportunity to pass to get better acquainted with his people. He works with them in the store. He meets with them socially and at their regular business gatherings. He plays with them at their picnics.

One employe said to the writer only the other day—"The employes of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store would go through fire and water for Wilkinson" (his pet name when he isn't looking). Whether this statement may be taken literally doesn't matter; it evidences the spirit of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney staff.

CORRECT METHODS; HIGH IDEALS.

What is true of President Wilkinson might be said over again of Robert Johnston, whose particular charge is the supervision of the merchandise buying of the store.

A buyer's difficulties are proverbial, and when the multitudinous perplexities incident to keeping a finger on the market pulse of the whole wide earth are considered, one would naturally expect little of the softer side of a man's nature to show, at least during business hours.

Quiet, dignified, patient, considerate, this merchandise man, while resolute in holding to correct methods and high ideals, has gained the highest regard and the affection of every buyer in the house.

GENEROUS SYMPATHY.

And John R. Towler, the general manager. Every man, every woman, every boy, every girl in the store watches him as he passes with a "there-goes-one-of-God's-gentlemen" thought, if indeed the thought be not often put into words, as one of the men in the store actually did put it, in addressing the writer.

Broad gauge, generous, sympathetic, just—there is no one in the house who feels a grievance but will bring it to Mr. Towler confident of satisfactory adjustment.

How about the discipline in a store conducted in that way, may well be asked. The answer is simple. Where love and loyalty are, there also will discipline be found.

What are the elements that have contributed to the creation of this efficient salesforce?

In the first place, this organization is the result of careful, conscientious, scientific selection on the part of the store management, whose chief characteristic has been that they have been able to judge men and women, and whose instinct in this regard has been re-enforced by the education gained through long experience in sensing the needs of a clientele refined in the art of requiring the utmost in service; as, for generations, this has been the class of customers patronizing the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store.

"The greatest study of mankind is man," and the superintendent of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store, Thomas H. Blundell, has proved a keen and skillful dissector of human nature, setting aside that which proved lacking in promise and holding whatever evidenced the possession of the germ of plastic growth.

PRACTICAL AND HUMAN.

How does he work? First, in order to understand the man, it will be necessary to say that Mr. Blundell disclaims the possession of any magic powers or any gift of second sight. He will acknowledge only the gift of common sense and he declares that this is all any man needs in dealing with his fellowman. He uses his common sense in the most practical ways.

In interviewing an applicant for a position, unless, indeed, that applicant has in object a particular department in which he has had experience, Mr. Blundell finds out first in what direction his tastes run by suggesting to him this, that or the other class of merchandise and noting what line is attractive to him, for he knows that a man can never make a success of any line of work for which he has no enthusiasm.

EFFECTIVELY "BROUGHT UP."

This applies especially to the engaging of inexperienced people, and it can be said that the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney force is in the main made up of people whom they have themselves brought up, and who in the majority of cases have proved most effective.

Mr. Blundell makes his appeal to these people on the basis of their self-interest by explaining to them the advantages to be gained in swimming with the tide as far as their likes and dislikes are concerned, and by reciting the educational advantages to be gained by them through being allowed opportunity to sell merchandise to a high-class clientele and to associate with workers who are among the most refined.

And indeed, the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store depends very largely for the education of its newer people upon this very thing. As Mr. Blundell expressed it, "The new employes come in sometimes as green as grass, but somehow they are quick to sense the spirit of the house and through a gradual process of evolution conform to it."

It might be well just here to ask upon what does this spirit of loyalty feed that it has grown so great in the Scruggs-Van-

1—Moonlight room
2—Main piano salon

Views in the piano department on sixth floor

3—Sound proof piano show room
4—Victrola section

dervoort-Barney establishment? It is not too much to say that it is a direct outgrowth of the traditions and sentiments of the house itself ingrained into the dispositions and characters of each successive corps of workers and treasured all the more today because effective for so many generations.

GUIDING THE APPLICANT.

Its present management is the very embodiment of these sentiments and principles and for that reason, it is only natural that they should be felt all the way along the line until they express themselves in and through the very humblest employe in the house.

But there must be something more than taste, and inclination on the part of the applicant to guide the superintendent in his task of making selections. He has, for example, a position to be filled in the art department and out of the number of applicants he must select one who, because of physical as well as mental qualities, is likely to be successful there.

Clearly, a person big, ungainly, awkward, with large clumsy hands, would not be his choice. His ideal would rather be one comparatively small physically, active, neat in appearance and dainty, in a way, so that she would be likely to be nimble of finger, as well as artistic in temperament.

ELEMENTS OF SELECTION.

He would not select an ignoramus to fill a position in the department of books or magazines; neither would his choice fall upon a dowd for the drapery or the home decorating department.

He might choose a slight, rather undersized man to sell neckties and socks, but his choice of a man for the clothing department would depend upon the man's size and figure and his more impressive qualities.

His selections for the millinery or the garment departments would be made from women who evidenced the art of knowing how to wear their own hats or clothing, and he would choose a woman with some figure for the corset department.

PSYCHOLOGY OF SUGGESTION.

The psychology of suggestion plays an important part in the placing of salespeople, and customers are attracted or repelled by the evident fitness or unfitness of the people who serve them

This idea of appropriate selection runs all through the house, extending even to the engaging of the men and women who do the portering, the housecleaning and the scrubbing.

The effect on the public mind of seeing an old, broken-down man or woman doing work around any store is peculiar. Customers assume a sort of proprietorship in the store in which they have long been trading, and such a sight arouses an unreasoning resentment which is always manifested directly against the house itself.

NOR IS AGE OVERLOOKED.

The elderly man or woman, however, has to be employed, and Mr. Blundell has solved this problem by engaging such people for positions which are removed as much as possible from the public eye. He selects younger and more able bodied, and usually as a consequence more tidy, people for the places where they have to come in contact with the trade.

This matter of "raising" employes is carried out in a very systematic and practical way, and has resulted most satisfactorily for the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store, completely refuting the argument made by some store managers that it doesn't pay to take pains to educate young people, for the reason that just as soon as they "get to know something" they "up and quit".

Probably 60 per cent of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney employes are "home-made", and most of these have been brought up from cash boys and cash girls.

The cash girls are under the direct care of a matron who has been selected because of her motherly qualities (here again "selection"), and whose objective is to gain the confidence of her charges in order that they may feel, no matter what happens, that they have a friend to whom they may go for advice and counsel.

They are taught refinement of behavior and speech and they are taught to be polite to each other, in the belief that as they gain in these qualities among themselves, they will become second nature to them in dealing with customers.

In the same way, they are taught to be honest with themselves and with their associates, in the expectation and assurance that by the inculation of this attribute during the youthful, formative period, it will remain with them throughout.

The boys are cared for in much the same way as are the girls, by a "selected" man.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES.

The Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store has at stated intervals lectures on phases of store service of interest to all classes of employes and to all ages.

The younger employes are given the rudiments of hygiene and are taught to be neat and tidy in appearance. They are taught to properly care for their hands and how to dress their hair neatly and correctly.

They learn that respect for parental authority is the first essential to proper respect for those in authority over them in the store.

Regular instruction is given in mathematics and writing, which is meant to fit young employes to make out checks quickly, neatly and accurately.

The lectures on hygiene, honesty, deportment, etc., are given by the matron or by some other specialist in these lines, and the instruction in mathematics and writing is given by expert floormen.

There are lectures for the older salespeople, for floormen and for buyers by other specialists or by the superintendent, the general manager or the head of the house himself.

EMPLOYES OF LONG CONNECTION.

In all the long history of the house, too, it has constantly recognized the loyalty of its force and there is probably no retail establishment in the country which can number among its capable employes men and women who have been longer with the establishment than have those of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney concern. At the same time, through the policies of the house and the loyalty of the employes, these elderly people have maintained an efficiency which makes of them no less important factors today than when at the zenith of their physical and mental capabilities.

Indeed, in all respects the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney store is a remarkable institution whose history is infinitely more interesting than the printed word can convey.

PRACTICAL IN TRAINING COST.

As nearly as can be arrived at, the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney employes cost the house no more than is paid by the average large retail establishment. Percentages in individual cases, of course, differ on account of varying conditions in the departments in which they work, but the general average ranges about parallel with what other good stores pay.

As THE DRYGOODSMAN sees it, however, as a result of this care in selection, because of this careful training and on account of the recognition of the fact that employes are not machines but creatures of sentiment, of reason and of spirit, there is a vastly greater return per individual in dollars and cents, as well as in those things that go to make a store distinctive, not alone in its own locality, but world-wide.

This is that distinction which the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney house has won. By its merchandise? Granted. But more, far more, because of the "atmosphere" which it has—an "atmosphere" created by a loyal, consecrated force.

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